Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 02385 141648Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------141656Z 073551 /44
O 140839 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2664

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2385

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 1)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SY, US, PFOR
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH ASAD

REF: BERN 1551

1. SWISS AMBASSADOR TOLD ME APRIL 13 THAT HE HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH PRESIDENT'S POLITICAL ADVISOR DAOUDY CONCERNING ASAD'S TRAVEL TO GENEVA MAY 9. HE TOLD DAOUDY THAT RECEPTION WOULD BE INFORMAL AS SWISS GOVERNMENT'S ROLE WAS ONE OF OFERING FACILITIES AND GOOD OFFICES TO BOTH PARTIES. HE REOCMMENDED SYRIANS CONSIDER RESERVING HOTEL ACCOMMMODATIONS AND ALSO DISCUSSED SYRIAN REQUIREMENTS FOR VEHICLES AND COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES. HE STRESSED THAT SWISS WISHED TO OFFER SAME TREATMENT TO BOTH PARTIES. HE ALSO TOLD DAOUDY IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT TALKS WOULD BE HELD AT VILLA DE SAUGY IN GENTHOD, 4 KILOMETERS FROM GENEVA AND WOULD BEGIN AT 1500 MAY 9 AND CONCLUDE THAT EVENING, BUT FINAL DECISION ON PLACE AND TIME OF MEETING WOULD BE MADE BY PARTIES.

2. AMBASSADOR SAID DAOUDY HAS INFORMED HIM THAT ASAD WOULD LIKE TO REMAIN OVERNIGHT IN GENEVA AND WOULD FOR
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SECURITY REASONS PREFER VILLA TO HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS. SYRIANS WOULD LIKE TO SEND ADVANCE TEAM OF FOREIGN MINISTRY, PRESIDENCY PROTOCOL AND SECURITY REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS. DAOUDY ALSO WISHED TO KNOW DETAILS OF SWISS PROTOCOL AND RECEPTION WHICH WOULD BE GIVEN PRESDIENT ASAD.

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3. AMBASSADOR SAID HE AND DAOUDY HAD ALSO TALKED IN PRELIMINARY WAY ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF SWISS-SYRIAN TALKS MORING MAY 10 AND OF SWISS OFFERING LUNCHEON FOR ASAD MAY 10, BUT NO DICISIONS WERE REACHED. DAOUDY COULD GIVE NO INFORMATION REGARDING COMPOSITION OF ASAD'S PARTY.

4. SWISS AMBASSADOR ANTICIPATES PROBLEMS IN BRINGING HOME TO SYRIANS THAT THEY ARE EXPECTED TO PAY THEIR OWN ACCOMMODATIONS AND OTHER EXPENSES. HE WOULD LIKE TOBE ABLE TO TELL THEM THAT WE HAVE AGREED ASSUME SUCH EXPENSES ON US SIDE.

5. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT PASS BERN.
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS
*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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